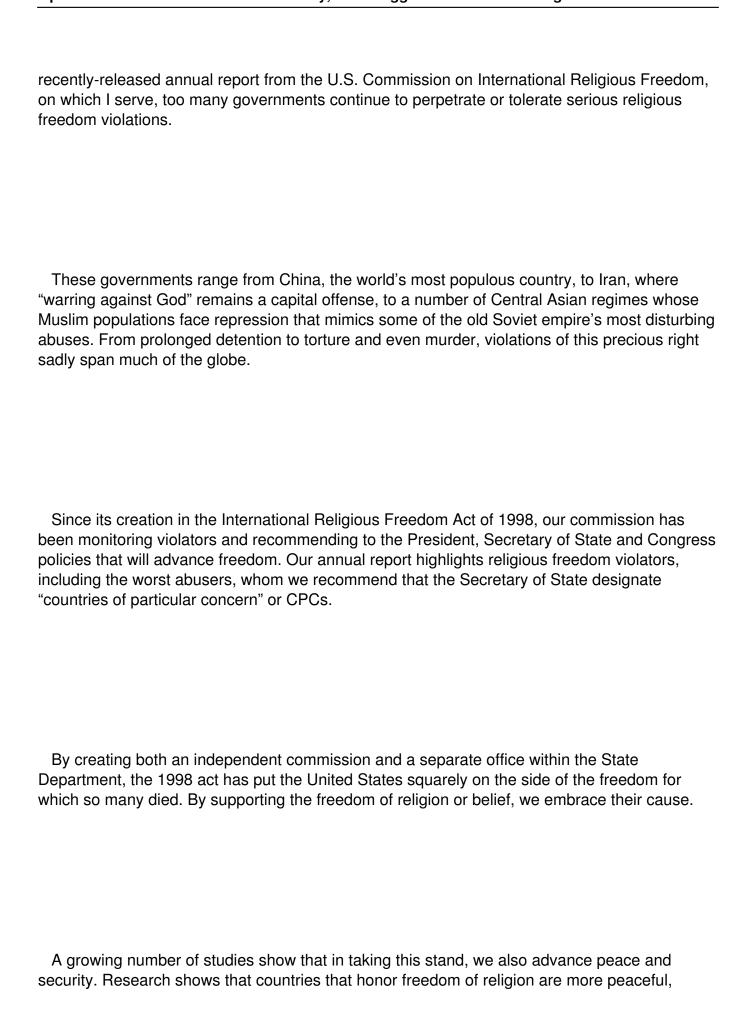
FOR YOUR INFORMATION
May 26, 2013 by Katrina Lantos Swett
The following was published in the Patriot-News on May 26, 2013.
As we prepare to observe Memorial Day this Monday, we reflect on how Americans in every generation have made the ultimate sacrifice to defend our liberties and keep us safe and secure. Indeed, those who have given their lives for our country often did so while combating the most lethal enemies of freedom. From Nazis in Europe to al Qaeda around the world, America's foes often have been the world's most tyrannical violators of fundamental human rights.
Among these rights is the freedom of religion or belief, the right of people everywhere to think as they please, believe or not believe as their conscience leads, peacefully practice their beliefs, and express them openly without fear or intimidation.

Today, this pivotal right is being denied across much of the world. According to the

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prosperous, and stable than those that do not. Nations that fail to respect basic rights, including religious freedom, often are plagued by insecurity and instability, wracked by war and poverty, and torn apart by violent radical movements and activities, including terrorism.
In other words, by standing for human dignity and worth, we can make the world safer not just for freedom, but through freedom. When we make freedom the goal, we advance other aims essential to the well-being of nations, including our own.
To that end, we offer a number of key recommendations to our government.
First, the White House should issue a national security strategy that elevates religious freedom to a top priority.
Second, the current session of Congress should hold hearings and embrace legislation that supports such freedom and reflects its critical importance to national security and global stability.

Third, our State Department should act annually and promptly to designate "Countries of Particular Concern" so that nations that torment their own people are put on notice of the need for fundamental change. The added attention will press these and other nations to embrace reforms that protect liberty.
Making religious freedom an integral part of U.S. foreign policy can be a game-changer for this nation and the world and a worthy tribute to the fallen whom we remember on Memorial Day.
Katrina Lantos Swett serves as Chair of the <u>U.S. Commission on International Religious</u> Freedom <u>(USCIRF).</u>
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